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BOOK REVIEW

HEFNER, Robert W. (ed.), *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. 270pp. Pbk. ISBN: 9780253010865. US\$28.

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Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century, like many other volumes on Pentecostalism, promises a state of the field overview of Pentecostalism around the world, with a focus on the developments among second and third generation adherents. It covers developments on all the major continents. Of course, it is always easy to criticize volumes with such a large scope for not including “everything”. Indeed, notable absences are South Korea and North America, while the chapter on “Africa” is in fact on Zimbabwe. However, the book does discuss in very illuminating ways the developments in parts of the world that until recently did not receive much attention within the study of Pentecostalism: the former USSR, China, and India. The book brings together authors who are recognized authorities, such as David and Bernice Martin, Paul Freston, David Maxwell and Katherine Wiegele, drawing on their own research.

The introduction by Robert Hefner gives an intelligent overview of the state of the field that is admirable for its historical depth and its global overview. The chapter is organized along 5 parallels Hefner identifies in the social genealogy of North American early twentieth century Pentecostalism and current Global South Pentecostalism. The first one, “trivially self-evident” as Hefner says, is the fact that Pentecostalism appeals to the religion-minded. Nevertheless, he feels it is necessary to point this out explicitly and offset the success of Pentecostalism worldwide to its failure in specific parts: those places dominated by secular social imaginaries. A second parallel is the marginal and precarious position of those attracted to Pentecostalism and consequent alienation from mainstream religious institutions with their stronger ties to political and economic elites. Thirdly, the rapid localization of Pentecostalism is remarkable both then and now: although missionaries may play a role in establishing a presence, locals usually quickly take over. This process is discussed in some depth, since it goes to the heart of the paradoxical nature of Pentecostalism: global, yet very adept at becoming part of local lives and reshaping local realities and religious landscapes. A fourth parallel is a focus on ethical subject formation, directed towards men especially, rather than societal or political reform. The fifth and final parallel between early twentieth century Pentecostalism and current “Global South” Pentecostalism concerns the dominance, at least in numbers, of women in Pentecostalism.

These are interesting and remarkable parallels, and although there is not necessarily anything new about these observations, it is good to have them all summarized in one place. However the juxtaposition of early twentieth-century US with the early decades of the twenty-first-century Global South could reinforce the unfortunate tendency within the sociology of religion to develop “universally valid” theory on societal developments based on the assumption that developments in “the west” will predict those outside the west. If anything, a focus on the cultural and social dynamics of Pentecostalism shows the futility of such teleological schemes as well as of the geographical distinctions implicit in them. Anyone discussing long-term societal and religious developments should critically reflect on these assumptions, something not all authors do (see for example the chapter by David Maxwell on Zimbabwe, which employs an uncritical common-sense definition of modernization). In contrast, the author of the second chapter of this book, David Martin, has long been known for his critique of teleological secularization narratives, and discusses the concept of multiple modernities in this chapter, and the book closes with a chapter by Peter L. Berger, who famously “retracted” his secularization theory.

All the chapters provide fresh perspectives and material that I would recommend to anyone starting out in the field of Pentecostalism, but also to anyone needing to read up on particular themes, such as the “Pentecostal gender paradox”, which is described and discussed in a very insightful way by the person who coined the phrase, Bernice Martin. The focus on second and third generation Pentecostals throws up new questions and developments, such as in the chapter by Paul Freston, who discusses whether there are limits to the growth of Pentecostalism. Indeed, there seem to be limits to growth, especially among the second and third generations of South American Pentecostals, but interestingly these limits do not seem to point towards secularization, but rather to a renewed interest for the “historicos”, the historical churches (mainline protestant or the Catholic church). According to Freston, an important reason for the disillusionment of many people with the Pentecostal churches has to do with the poor political performance of the Pentecostals in Brazil: their Christianity does not seem to inoculate them against the temptations of corruption and power-brokering.

The last four chapters deal with China, Russia, India and the Philippines, respectively. Each of these chapters discusses the history of Pentecostalism as well as recent developments. In all cases, the spread of prosperity teachings has made a remarkable impact. Furthermore, the authors of all these chapters have a good eye for the economic disparities within Pentecostalism, pointing out the ways some churches attract more upwardly mobile or “middle class” groups, whereas others mobilize mainly the poor. The chapter on India especially gives quite wonderful and moving descriptions of how “storefront Pentecostalism” enables women in Bangalore slums, subject to humiliation, abuse, grinding poverty and depression, to claim dignity and respect and a brighter future. In contrast, the chapter on China describes how the newer masculine “boss Christian” churches in urban areas sidelined the role of charismatic women, central to some parts of the Pentecostal movement especially in rural areas. The last chapter

describes the developments within one of the largest Catholic charismatic movements in the world, the Philippine El-Shaddai. As the leader, Mike Velarde, grows older there seem to be some attempts at institutionalization, and certain more grass-roots charismatic practices seem to have been suppressed, seemingly following the familiar pattern of the routinization of charisma. Like the chapter on India, this chapter emphasizes how Pentecostalism empowers the poor to gain self-respect as well as a perspective on a better life.

In conclusion, this volume is on the whole theoretically sophisticated, providing food for thought, as well as geographically broad-minded. I would recommend it both to first time students of Pentecostalism as well as to long-time scholar who wish to be informed on developments in particular regions.